

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SINGAP 03798 01 OF 02 241044Z  
ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-08 IO-06 INR-05 PM-03  
PA-01 SP-02 L-01 H-01 EB-04 NSC-05 CIAE-00  
DODE-00 NSAE-00 /057 W  
-----094340 241056Z /21

R 240920Z AUG 78  
FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 943  
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA  
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR  
AMEMBASSY MANILA  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SINGAPORE 3798

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1  
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, SN  
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S FIRST CALL ON PRIME MINISTER

REF: SINGAPORE A-119

1. SUMMARY. MY FIRST CALL ON THE PRIME MINISTER WAS AN HOUR'S BROAD-RANGING CONVERSATION DURING WHICH HE RAISED NO SPECIFIC ISSUES AND SEEMED RATHER TO WANT TO GET WELL ACQUAINTED. HE WAS PLEASED WITH THE US-ASEAN MINISTERIAL MEETINGS AND THE TOP-LEVEL ATTENTION RECEIVED BY THE ASEAN MINISTERS. LEE BELIEVES THAT THE SOVIETS ARE PROMOTING VIETNAM'S RECENT AND UPCOMING OVERTURES TO THE ASEAN COUNTRIES. HE WENT OVER HIS CONCERNS, RECENTLY EXPRESSED IN A NATIONAL DAY SPEECH, ABOUT IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN SINGAPORE AND ADAPTING THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM TO PRESERVE ASIAN VALUES. HE INFORMED ME THAT HE WILL BE VISITING WASHINGTON TWICE DURING HIS VISIT TO THE UNITED  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SINGAP 03798 01 OF 02 241044Z

STATES IN OCTOBER TO ADDRESS THE INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN FLORIDA, AND PLANS TO SPEND ONE NIGHT IN NEW YORK.  
END SUMMARY.

2. I PAID MY FIRST CALL ON PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW ON AUGUST 23. WE HAD AN HOUR'S LEISURELY CONVERSATION DURING WHICH THE PM RAISED NO SPECIFIC ISSUES BUT RESPONDED AT SOME LENGTH

TO SUBJECTS I RAISED AND SPENT ABOUT HALF THE TIME ASKING ABOUT MY EXPERIENCE AS GOVERNOR OF SOUTH DAKOTA. I FOUND HIM CORDIAL, RELAXED AND APPARENTLY INTERESTED IN FINDING OUT WHAT THE NEW AMERICAN AMBASSADOR IS LIKE. HE REMARKED THAT A NEWCOMER TO THE ASIAN SCENE CAN BRING A FRESH APPROACH TO PROBLEMS HERE AND THAT A POLITICAL BACKGROUND WILL BE USEFUL ("POLITICIANS AS A RULE KNOW WHAT IS FEASIBLE POLITICALLY AND WHAT IS NOT") SINCE THE POLITICS OF SEASIA ARE IMPORTANT AND MUST BE UNDERSTOOD. NOTING THAT I AM THE FIRST POLITICAL AMBASSADOR TO BE SENT TO SINGAPORE, HE SUGGESTED THAT THE PRESIDENT MAY HAVE HAD THIS FACTOR IN MIND WHEN HE APPOINTED ME. HE WENT ON TO ASK ABOUT MY TIES WITH THE PRESIDENT AND EXPRESSED SYMPATHY WITH THE HEAVY BURDEN AN AMERICAN PRESIDENT MUST CARRY. WHEN I ASKED WHETHER THERE WERE ANY SPECIFIC MATTERS ON WHICH WE SHOULD BE ACTING, HE SAID THAT HE HAD NO PARTICULAR CONCERNS REGARDING THE US AT THE MOMENT AND THAT HE WOULD BE VERY DIRECT IN CALLING THEM TO MY ATTENTION SHOULD ANY ARISE.

3. REGARDING THE US-ASEAN MINISTERIALS, LEE SAID LITTLE EXCEPT THAT THEY WERE A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT AND WELL WORTH THE EFFORT. HE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE TIME SPENT WITH ASEAN MINISTERS BY THE PRESIDENT AND CABINET MEMBERS. HE DID NOTE THAT HE CONSIDERS ASEAN OF PRIMARY IMPORTANCE TO SINGAPORE AND THE REGION POLITICALLY AS WELL AS ECONOMICALLY AND THAT DISCUSSING THE POLITICAL ASPECTS OF ASEAN COMES PERHAPS MORE EASILY TO SINGAPORE THAN TO ITS PARTNERS.  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SINGAP 03798 01 OF 02 241044Z

4. OF MOST INTEREST WAS LEE'S RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION ABOUT WHY THE USSR IS SUPPORTING VIETNAM'S CONCILIATORY APPROACHES TO ASEAN. HE BELIEVES THAT THESE APPROACHES ARE NOT ONLY SUPPORTED BY THE SOVIETS BUT WERE PROMOTED BY THEM, ADDING THAT THOSE WHO FOLLOW COMMUNIST COUNTRIES' INTERNATIONAL BEHAVIOR HAVE COME TO EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED. HE WAS PUZZLED HOWEVER ABOUT WHY VIETNAM JOINED COMECON, WONDERING WHETHER VIETNAM DID NOT OBTAIN SOME UNPUBLISHED ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES IN RETURN FOR JOINING. I ASKED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT ONE OF THE ASEAN COUNTRIES MIGHT SIGN A SEPARATE "PEACE, FRIENDSHIP AND NEUTRALITY" AGREEMENT WITH THE SRV. LEE FIRST SAID "NO" BUT THEN WENT DOWN THE LIST OF ASEAN HEADS OF GOVERNMENT AND SAID THAT POSSIBLY MALAYSIA MIGHT DO SO SINCE IT IS MOST INCLINED TOWARD DEVELOPING ITS RELATIONS WITH INDOCHINA.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SINGAP 03798 02 OF 02 241054Z

ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-08 IO-06 INR-05 PM-03

PA-01 SP-02 L-01 H-01 EB-04 NSC-05 CIAE-00

DODE-00 NSAE-00 /057 W

-----094388 241057Z /21

R 240920Z AUG 78

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 944

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SINGAPORE 3798

LIMDIS

5. I COMPLIMENTED THE PM ON HIS RECENT NATIONAL DAY SPEECH (SEE SINGAPORE A-119) ON THE FUTURE LEADERSHIP OF SINGAPORE AND ON PRESERVING ASIAN VALUES IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM. LEE RESPONDED AT SOME LENGTH ALONG THE LINES OF HIS SPEECH. HE SAID THAT THE COUNTRY IS NOW IN GOOD SHAPE AND THAT IT IS TIME TO FOCUS ON HOW TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN SINGAPORE. HE WANTS TO REFORM THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM TO PRESERVE ASIAN CULTURE AND VALUES BECAUSE HE IS CONCERNED THAT THE YOUNG RISK LOSING THESE VALUES. HE AGREED WITH MY OBSERVATION THAT PUTTING DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER GOH KENG SWEE IN CHARGE OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM WILL BRING A FRESH, UNACADEMIC VIEWPOINT TO BEAR ON THE BROADER PROBLEM OF FORMING SINGAPORE'S YOUTH.

6. LEE CONFIRMED THAT HE WILL BE VISITING WASHINGTON WHEN HE GOES TO THE UNITED STATES IN OCTOBER TO ADDRESS THE INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN FLORIDA. I OFFERED TO BE OF ANY ASSISTANCE HE MIGHT NEED, MENTIONING THAT I AM A GOOD FRIEND OF GOVERNOR CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SINGAP 03798 02 OF 02 241054Z

ASKEW. HE SAID THAT AS HIS SCHEDULE DEVELOPS HE MAY TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE OFFER. AT THE MOMENT HE PLANS TO ARRIVE IN WASHINGTON THE WEEKEND BEFORE THE CONFERENCE TO REST, GO TO FLORIDA, THEN RETURN TO WASHINGTON FOR A FEW DAYS. HE PLANS TO

SPEND ONE NIGHT IN NEW YORK (THIS WILL BE DURING THE UNGA)  
BEFORE RETURNING TO SINGAPORE. WE WILL KEEP IN TOUCH WITH HIS  
OFFICE TO FONCIRM HIS TRAVEL PLANS.

7. COMMENT: FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH, MY INITIAL IMPRESSION OF THE  
PRIME MINISTER IS OF A MAN FIRMLY IN CHARGE OF THE COUNTRY,  
BUT PERHAPS MOVING AWAY FROM DAY-TO-DAY PERSONAL CONTROL TOWARD  
AN ELDER STATESMAN'S ROLE; RELAXED, LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE  
TO IDENTIFY AND RESOLVE PROBLEMS. ONE CANNOT HELP BUT BE IM-  
PRESSED BY THE STRENGTH OF HIS INTELLECT AND THE EXTREMELY  
BROAD RANGE OF HIS INTERESTS, EXTENDING FAR BEYOND SINGAPORE.  
KNEIP

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRIME MINISTER, AMBASSADORS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 24 aug 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1978SINGAP03798  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** X1  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D780346-0731  
**Format:** TEL  
**From:** SINGAPORE  
**Handling Restrictions:**  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1978/newtext/t19780827/aaaaawtg.tel  
**Line Count:** 182  
**Litigation Code IDs:**  
**Litigation Codes:**  
**Litigation History:**  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Message ID:** 8b04a45c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ACTION EA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** LIMDIS  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 4  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** LIMDIS  
**Reference:** 78 SINGAPORE A-119  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 05 may 2005  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 1632465  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** AMBASSADOR'S FIRST CALL ON PRIME MINISTER  
**TAGS:** PGOV, PINT, SN  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/8b04a45c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014